Page 2
Countdown to College
Page 2
Learn the Lingo

According to an Emory University study, teens who knew more stories about their extended family (grandparents, great-aunts and uncles, etc.) showed "higher levels of emotional well-being, and also higher levels of identity achievement." Family stories provide a sense of identity through time, and help children understand who they are in the world. "There is something powerful about actually knowing these stories," the study concludes.

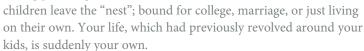


**Emotional Wellness** 

### Coping with your Empty Nest

Whether you're counting down the days until your kids go off to college or you can't help but get teary-eyed whenever you think of your "babies" leaving home, an empty nest is inevitable.

Empty Nest Syndrome was popularized in the 1970s by sociologists and describes the feeling parents get when their



Remember that it's normal to feel sad about suddenly having an empty house, especially if you had been a stay-at-home parent and your "job" has abruptly come to an end. These days, parents are much closer to their children than they were in previous generations and much more involved in their academic and social lives. A child moving away is not just a transition for the child, but the whole family. However, it's interesting to note that according to a 2003 article in the American Psychological Association's *Monitor on Psychology* magazine, things are changing.

More and more parents are looking forward to their empty nest and enjoying their freedom. Many empty nesters are excited to finally be able to pursue their own interests. Research is showing that parents report improved relationships with each other, and even between them and their children.

It is important to let your kids have their independence. Have a talk with them ahead of time about things like safety, grades,

and finances. Share your feelings about missing them, but let them know you are proud and there for them if they need you. Don't be a helicopter parent! Now is the time to let your kids test out everything you taught them and survive on their own in the real world.

Tips for enjoying your newfound time:

- Take up a new hobby or get re-invested in an old one
- Do some volunteer work
- Go back to school
- Travel
- Enjoy time with your significant other
- Treat yourself to something special, such as a night out, a massage, a manicure, or a shopping trip



#### Credit Cards 101

The average college student has 4.6 credit cards and seniors typically graduate with a credit card balance of \$4,100. 84% of undergraduates surveyed expressed a need for more financial education.

Here are some tips provided by Sallie Mae:



- Stick to one low interest rate card.
- Don't agree to any increased credit limit.
- Pay the bill on time to avoid interest charges.
- Use credit cards only for emergencies. Pizza doesn't count!
- Before charging tuition, look for scholarships, grants, or low-cost federal student loans.



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## "I liked the quick response and excellent resource materials."

Mandy, Springfield, MA

**Education** 

# Countdown to College

Figuring out the "next step" can be a stressful time for high school students. Where to go? What to study? The key to finding the perfect school for you is to start early and do your homework.

For some students, the traditional four-year school is the answer. For others, a vocational or technical school can provide the training for a rewarding career. Still others choose to begin their studies at a two-year school. When you consider the soaring tuition bills at four-year colleges, the option of starting at a two-year school makes a lot of sense. As you begin your school search, you need to consider several factors including the following:

- Type of school four-year, two-year, technical
- **Size of the school** some students welcome the opportunities of a large universities while others prefer the comfort of a small campus
- **Geographic location** some students are ready to explore new areas of the country while others prefer to stay in-state
- Academic programs since many college students change majors, it is wise to choose a school with enough options.
- **Housing options** is on-campus housing available all four years?

As you prepare your "wish list" of schools, you can check out college guide books including the *College Handbook* by The College Board and *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*. Your local library will have



many of these resources available to borrow. You can also search online at www.collegeboard.com, www.students.gov, and, for a virtual visit, www.ecampustours.com. College fairs are another good way to speak to many different school representatives at once. To find one of these events in your area, check out www.nacacnet.org.

Once you have a workable number of schools on your list, it's time to visit. Be sure to call ahead to schedule a tour and information session. If you are interested in a certain major or sport, schedule a meeting with a professor or coach during your visit. Some questions you might want to ask include: class size, campus safety, and whether credits are given for Advanced Placement courses. In addition to the formal tour, do your own investigating. Take a stroll through the neighborhood, talk to students to get their input, read the school newspaper and bulletin boards, and eat in the cafeteria. After each visit, take some notes on your impressions of the school. When it's time to decide, these will come in handy. For additional information, check the Education section of this site.

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#### Learn the Lingo

If you have a high school or college student, you probably know that the preferred method of communication is texting. If there seems to be a communication gap, you need to learn the lingo to help keep the lines of communication open. Below are some common examples of chat lingo. How many do you know?

1. CUL8R	a. be back later
2. H&K	b. oh my gosh
3. LOL	c. please call me
4. OMG	d. see you later
5. TTYL	e. you there?
6. WBS	f. talk to you later
7. PCM	g. laughing out loud
8. BCNU	h. hug and kiss
9. BBL	i. write back soon
10. YT	j. be seeing you

Answer Key: 1/d, 2/h, 3/g, 4/b, 5/f, 6/i, 7/c, 8/j, 9/a, 10/c

For more texting abbreviations, visit our website and enter **GO 2331** into any search box to read *Chat-Speak Decoded*.

